

exerted by Klan organizations in Piedmont counties throughout Holden's tenure as governor aggravated his efforts to reinstate peace and bring the Republican Party together. Forced into action as the 1870 election neared, Holden called out troops, providing Klan members and Democratic papers with a campaign issue—that of military occupation and abuses of civil liberties by the governor. Through an effective use of newspapers throughout the state, and despite Holden's efforts to stop Klan violence, the Democratic Party was able to regain control of the legislature and effect changes to the state through legal avenues.⁸⁴

Conservatives in Wilmington stepped up efforts to curtail both black and white Republican participation in government and politics. One argument that gained popularity during the 1868 campaign, recalled in later elections, centered on property ownership and taxes. Business minded political pundits pointed out that, of the 3,500 voters in the city, 2,000 were employed by Conservatives. Furthermore, they argued that taxpayers and those with businesses interests should dictate the city's future. Conservatives also overtly threatened the livelihood of black office

seekers by identifying them and their businesses so as to encourage consumers to shop elsewhere and employers to hire like-minded, i.e., Conservative, employees.⁸⁵ Hampered by Conservative activity and internal strife, the New Hanover Republican Party had trouble maintaining its organizational control. Key to the Republican Party's internal strife was its inability to reconcile the agendas of its white and black members.⁸⁶

The Legislature, dominated by the Democratic Party, met in November 1870 and determined that Holden's efforts to rein in the Klan constituted enough of a miscarriage of justice and inappropriate use of his office that they sought to impeach him.⁸⁷ Klan members featured prominently

⁸⁵ Evans, *Ballots and Fence Rails*, 158-159.

⁸⁶ The Republican Party established a practice of using wealthy white Republicans to sponsor popular blacks as politicians, resulting in factionalism among publicly visible Republicans who vied for sponsorships. Such an organizational structure existed in Wilmington and the leading whites came to be known as "the Ring." Approximately 2,000 black and 100 – 150 white Republicans were in Wilmington at the time and all were managed by 15 to 20 white Republican businessmen. Of those men in the Ring, about six were first- and second-generation New Englanders in the city before the war and others had Union Army connections. Native members of the Ring included Edward Cantwell, the Russell family, and black members of the Sampson and Howe families. Evans, *Ballots and Fence Rails*, 153-155, 162- 165.

⁸⁷ New Hanover's representatives in the General Assembly of 1870-72 were Senators Charles W. McClammy and George W. Price, Jr. and Representatives Samuel A. Ashe (resigned March 1, 1872, and no new election held for his replacement), George Z. French (resigned July 1, 1871), George L. Mabson, and James A. Heaton (replaced French on November 21, 1871, after special election). Alfred Moore Waddell assumed his first political office after the Civil War when he was selected to represent the third district of North Carolina in the U.S. House of Representatives and served for three terms from 1871-1879. Cheney, 451, 453, 559, 695; Hamilton, *Reconstruction*, 537-557; *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, 1/13/2005,

⁸⁴ Commonly called the Kirk-Holden War, Governor Holden's efforts to stop the actions of the Klan in Piedmont counties resulted in occupation of Caswell and Alamance by forces under the command of Colonel George Kirk of Tennessee. The Klan's activities in those areas had become exceedingly violent, and Holden sought to end the violence before the election. Kirk's forces occupied the counties, arresting around 100 suspected Klan members from a list provided by the governor. The result was that several members who had favored ending Klan terrorism came forward and renounced their membership in the group. Holden hoped to hold military trials for the arrested men, but, legal maneuvers by Democrats meant most of the men never went to trial and were eventually released from jail. Evans, *Ballots and Fence Rails*, 146-149; Trelease, *White Terror*, 216-223; Hamilton, *Reconstruction*, 496-533.